

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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R 220414Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 804

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 2294

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, ELAB, SOCI, RP

SUBJECT: NATIONAL REFERENDUM: RELIGIOUS, LABOR AND STUDENTS
HOLD RALLIES

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

REF: MANILA 2153

1. OPPONENTS OF REFERENDUM HELD OUTDOOR PENITENTIAL SERVICE PROCESSION (REFTEL) AT INTRAMUROS AFTERNOON FEB 21. TRAINED OBSERVER ESTIMATED CROWD AT 5-700. JOURNALIST WITH GOOD CONTACTS AMONG CLERGY CLAIMS AT LEAST 2-3,000 PARTICIPANTS. CROWD CONSISTED PRIMARILY OF CATHOLIC COLLEGE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, PRIESTS AND NUNS, AND SQUATTERS FROM TONDO ALTHOUGH GOVERNMENT HAD PICKED UP HEAD OF TONDO ACTIVIST GROUP FEB 19, PRESUMABLY TO FORESTALL TOO MUCH SQUATTER PARTICIPATION. SERVICE LED BY FATHER ALEGAR AND FATHER BLANCO, JESUIT ACTIVISTS. SENATORS DIOKNO, TANADA AND SALONGA IN CROWD. THERE WAS EXTENSIVE POLICE COVERAGE OF DEMONSTRATION BUT NO INTERFERENCE WITH NUNS DISTRIBUTING STATEMENTS IN TAGALOG AND ENGLISH ON WHAT SERVICE ALL ABOUT. REPORTS COMMUNISTS MIGHT TRY MOVE FROM PENITENTIAL
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SERVICE TO EMBASSY TO DENONSTRATE NEVER MATERIALIZED.

2. MEANWHILE, PRESIDENT MARCOS WAS SPEAKING BEFORE ESTIMATED 20,000 WORKERS IN SOLIDARITY RALLY AT FOLK ARTS THEATER. IN ADDITION TO ANNOUNCING HALF BILLION PESO WORKERS' HOUSING PROGRAM WHICH HIS WIFE WILL SUPERVISE, PRESIDENT ADDED NEW CRISIS TO THOSE THREATENING NATION, I.E., POSSIBLE FAILURE OF NEW SOCIETY. MARCOS CONTENTED ALTERNATIVE TO HIS SUCCEEDING WAS "POSSIBLE BLOODY REVOLUTION" IN WHICH WORKERS WOULD BE BIGGEST LOSERS. PRESIDENT SPOKE MOSTLY IN TAGALOG AND FEB. 22 MANILA DAILIES CARRY ONLY BARE BONES OUTLINE OF HIS ADDRESS. NEWS BROADCASTS THIS MORNING, HOWEVER, REPORT PRESIDENT WARNED THAT CERTAIN AMERICANS IN THE U.S., WHOSE MINDS HAD BEEN POISONED BY NEW SOCIETY CRITICS LIVING ABROAD, HAD DISTORTED IMPRESSION OF WHAT WAS GOING ON IN PHILIPPINES. (FYI: MARCOS MAY BE IN FOR MORE CRITICISM THIS TIME FROM REGIME PUBLICIST PRIMATIVO MUJARES WHO HAS REPORTEDLY DEFECTED IN SAN FRANCISCO AND IS THREATENING TO TELL ALL, INCLUDING HOW HE HELPED RIG 1973 REFERENDUM. MIJARES, A THOROUGH SCOUNDREL, WAS UNDER INVESTIGATION FOR INTERALIA GAMBLING AWAY \$50,000 IN GOVERNMENT FUNDS IN LAS VEGAS. END FYI.)

3. 3. IN THIRD EVENT SAME DAY, STUDENTS AT UP CONVOCATION LISTENED TO ANTI-REGERNNDUM SPEECHES BY SENATORS SALONGA AND ROXAS. ACCORDING OVSERVER WHO ATTENDED, "GOVERNMENT SABATOGUE" RESPONSIBLE FOR POWER FAILURES WHICH THREE TIMES CUT OFF LOUD SPEAKER AND AIR CONDITIONING SYSTEMS DURING COURSE GATHERING.

4. COMMENT: AS REFERENDUM DAY DRAWS NEAR PRESIDENT'S RHETORIC BECOMES MORE APOCALYPTIC. OPPOSITION, AT LEAST AS EVIDENCED IN OUTDOOR PENITENTIAL SERVICE, CONTINUES DECIDEDLY FEEBLE. LABOR LEADERS OCA (PTGWO) AND MENDOZA (ALU) BOTH EXPRESSED TO LABATT THEIR SATISFACTION LARGE WORKER TURNOUT. THEY NEGLECTED MENTION FACT, HOWEVER, THAT LABOR SECRETARY OPLE HAD FIRED OFF PERSUASIVE TELEGRAMS TO LEADING MANILA AREA FIRMS URGING MANAGEMENT TO RELEASE EMPLOYEES FOR ATTENDANCE LABOR RALLY.
SULLIVAN

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